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SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 1198th MEETING

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,
on Tuesday, 11 March 1997, at 3 p.m.

Chairman: Mr. BANTON

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The meeting was called to order at 3.15 p.m.

CONSIDERATION OF REPORTS, COMMENTS AND INFORMATION SUBMITTED BY STATES PARTIES UNDER ARTICLE 9 OF THE CONVENTION (agenda item 5) (continued)

Tenth to fourteenth periodic reports of Pakistan (CERD/C/299/Add.6)

1. At the invitation of the Chairman, Mr. Akram, Mr. Khan, Ms. Janjua and Mr. Qazi (Pakistan) took seats at the Committee table.

2. Mr. AKRAM (Pakistan) said that an effort had been made to adhere to the Committee's guidelines in the preparation of the report and to take into account the Committee's previous observations. Pakistan's deep and consistent commitment to the elimination of all forms of racial discrimination was fully reflected in its policies. It had participated actively in the drafting of the Convention and had been among the first to ratify it. It had played a leading role in the opposition to, and ultimate elimination of, apartheid and, together with Nigeria, had initiated the International Convention on the Suppression and Punishment of the Crime of Apartheid, to which it was also a party. It believed in continuous and active efforts to eliminate new forms of racial discrimination and xenophobia.

3. Referring to article 1, paragraph 1, of the Convention, he stated that there was no distinction based on race, colour, descent, or national or ethnic origin in Pakistan. As a result of waves of migration into the Indus valley over several thousands of years, the racial and ethnic composition of the people of Pakistan was varied and complex, making it extremely difficult to divide the population into racial or ethnic categories. Although the Committee's requests for data on the ethnic characteristics of the population had been noted, no question on ethnic origin had been asked in Pakistan's decennial census. In addition to reasons given in the Committee's guidelines for States' reluctance to put that question, he observed that few, if any, of the people of Pakistan would know what the question meant and how to answer it. In order to accommodate the Committee's concerns, however, data on linguistic composition, drawn from population projections, had been provided as the closest approximation - in the case of Pakistan - to the requirement for information on the ethnic background of the population. Although it had been noted from previous discussions with the Committee that the question of religious minorities was not considered to be strictly within the purview of the Convention, information had been provided on religious minorities since they were the only "minorities" in Pakistan.

4. Pakistan was a functioning democracy and four general elections had been held since 1988. Despite the challenges posed by underdevelopment, political differences and external threats, democratic structures had survived and grown in strength, and the fundamental constitutionally-guaranteed human rights had remained unfettered. Citizens could air their grievances and seek redress through a vigorously free press and an open and accessible judicial system. Even in troubled times, Pakistan's open society guarded against any institutional imposition of oppression, including racial discrimination. His delegation was willing to answer any questions and provide to the Committee as soon as possible any information that was not immediately available.

5. Mr. GARVALOV (Country Rapporteur) welcomed the resumption of the dialogue with Pakistan after a lapse of 10 years and hoped that the State party would submit its next periodic report in accordance with article 9, paragraph 1, of the Convention. In preparing his statement on the fourteenth periodic report, he had based his comments primarily on Pakistan's ninth and fourteenth reports and had also drawn on relevant United Nations sources, such as reports of the Commission on Human Rights, the Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, the Special Rapporteur of the Commission on Human Rights on the question of religious intolerance, the Special Rapporteur on torture and the ILO Committee of Experts on the Application of Conventions and Recommendations. He had also consulted relevant materials in the reports of the United States State Department and of certain NGOs, such as Human Rights Watch, Amnesty International and the Lawyers Committee for Human Rights.

6. He commended Pakistan's constructive approach in its fourteenth report, which supplemented information given in the previous report, answered questions raised by Committee members in 1987, gave an impressive account of measures taken in respect of minorities and reflected an effort to adhere to the Committee's guidelines. Pakistan's active cooperation with the two Special Rapporteurs of the Commission on Human Rights, inviting them to visit the country in 1995 and 1996, was particularly commendable.

7. The fourteenth report provided valuable information and further clarification on Pakistan's legal framework, population, languages, press censorship, minorities, various new institutional arrangements and Afghan refugees. He welcomed the State party's commitment to the elimination of racial discrimination, its leading role in the elimination of apartheid, its concerted efforts to combat new forms of racial discrimination and xenophobia, its dedication to upholding and implementing the provisions of the Convention, its effort to translate the provisions of the Convention into its legal framework and the specific constitutional guarantees referred to in paragraph 7 of the report. The completion of the process of democratization, referred to in paragraph 8, was a very important achievement and he hoped that the process would be nurtured further. Another achievement had been the full restoration of the Constitution following the lifting of martial law. He noted from paragraph 13 that Islamic and common law complemented each other.

8. Regarding the provision of data on ethnic origin, he recalled the Committee's concluding observations on the ninth periodic report in paragraph 789 of the Committee's report to the General Assembly (A/42/18) and the reply by the representative of Pakistan thereto (para. 796) to the effect that minorities denoted religious minorities, that ethnic origin was a purely subjective criterion and that there was no single linguistic majority. While he understood Pakistan's official views and positions, which appeared to be unchanged, additional questions arose from the fourteenth report. The report referred variously to "minorities", "minority communities", "minority groups", "communities", "minorities and other sections of the population" and "regional groups". Did they all denote only religious minorities and, if so, why the great variety? Were the different languages spoken in Pakistan, referred to in paragraph 18, not a sign of ethnic differences, and were they taught in schools? There had been no response to the Committee's request for clarification as to whether language should not be construed as a compound of

the criteria for defining a minority. Paragraph 22 of the fourteenth report did say, however, that minorities constituted 3.32 per cent of the total population and consisted of Christians, Hindus, Ahmadis, Parsis, Buddhists and Sikhs, which prompted the question why those groups were officially considered minorities while the linguistic groups, which far exceeded them in number, were not.

9. The Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities, adopted by the United Nations General Assembly, recognized that there were at least four categories of minorities. Moreover, Pakistan's constitutional provision that any section of citizens having a distinct language, script or culture had the right to preserve and promote the same and, subject to law, establish institutions for that purpose could be taken to constitute recognition of the existence of linguistic and cultural minorities as well as religious minorities, and indeed he considered that in providing such a guarantee, the Constitution showed great vision and scope.

10. The existence of "tribal areas" in Pakistan, as reported in the ninth periodic report (CERD/C/149/Add.12), corroborated claims that there were ethnic or tribal differences; tribal areas could not be described as religious minorities. One reference work (Europa Publications regional survey on the Far East and Australasia, 1996) made that point, referring to the Punjabi as the principal ethnic group, other major groups being Sindhi, Pashtun, Urdu and Balochi, while another source mentioned the "Mohajir nation" as an ethnic group. He asked who were the Kalash people referred to in paragraph 29 of the fourteenth report.

11. Referring to the impressive list of new institutions, forums and schemes to help solve the problems of minorities, mentioned in paragraphs 23-41 of the report, he requested more information about the work and effectiveness of those bodies, particularly the Minorities Affairs Division. One of the Division's tasks being to protect minorities against discrimination, he asked what kind of discrimination was meant. Had the National Commission for Minorities already considered any of the laws, executive instructions, orders or procedural practices referred to in paragraph 25 (a) of the report, which laws or practices were concerned and what recommendations had been made? In particular, had the National Commission considered the present system of separate electorates for minorities? What exactly was the new system of representation referred to in paragraph 58 of the report (under art. 14 (c) of the Constitution)? And in what ways had it enhanced the political right of minorities to participate in elections? Had the National Commission considered the violence that had erupted between government forces and tribes in the Malakand Division of the North West Frontier Province over the separate electorate system? Had it looked into any grievances by members of minority communities and what were the grievances? The Supreme Court had ruled, in response to a constitutional petition submitted on behalf of over 20 million bonded labourers and 1.5 million nomads denied the right to vote, that redress could only be sought on an individual basis through the normal legal process; he asked whether a solution had been found. With reference to paragraph 32 of the report, he wished to know what the recommendations of the seminar on the uplift of minorities and the electoral system had been and whether they concerned the system of separate electorates. The information provided about

welfare schemes for minorities in paragraphs 34-41 was important, but would have been better understood if the amounts quoted in rupees had been expressed in comparative terms, for instance as against annual average per capita income.

12. The large numbers of Afghan refugees placed a very heavy burden on Pakistan, and the Government's efforts to provide them with shelter and the hospitality with which they had been received were appreciated. Much information had been provided on the implementation of articles 2, 3, 5 and 7 of the Convention but, regrettably, little in connection with articles 4 and 6. With regard to article 2, Pakistan's anti-discrimination position and policies were welcomed, but he observed that the definition of racial discrimination in article 1, paragraph 1, of the Convention was broader than the terms used in the Pakistan Constitution, which prohibited discrimination based on religion, race, caste or sex. Since article 25 of the Constitution provided that all citizens were equal before the law and were entitled to equal protection of the law, he asked what were the legal rights of non-citizens, such as the Afghan refugees.

13. With reference to paragraph 48 of the report, he said that, according to Amnesty International, violent conflicts had broken out between different ethnic, religious and political groups, particularly in Karachi. Information on whether the National Assembly had approved several bills, including one on the abolition of the death penalty and of flogging for minors, would be welcome, as would details of the work of a commission of inquiry that had been set up to examine laws that discriminated against women and to suggest amendments and other remedial measures.

14. The reference in paragraph 49 to the fact that the State promoted, with special care, the educational and economic interests of backward classes or areas was very welcome. He asked whether there was any specific legislation or other instruments which gave effect to that guarantee.

15. From paragraph 51, it was clear that the Government was trying very hard to support the social sector by increasing spending on it by 33 per cent and launching a Social Action Programme which, inter alia, covered minority affairs. Was the programme fully operational? Had the 30,400 new schools been built? Had the 9,800 existing schools been renovated? And were the 300 unfinished rural health facilities in Sind and the new 200 rural health facilities in Baluchistan finished or under construction?

16. There was only one paragraph in the report dealing with Pakistan's implementation of article 4 of the Convention, and it did not provide enough information on relevant legislation and judicial and normative acts. It seemed, however, that Pakistan did not challenge the mandatory nature of that article. He asked whether the Penal Code had been amended since 1973, when efforts had been made to bring its provisions into line with those of the Convention. Information was needed on how the Penal Code punished acts of racial discrimination, whether there were cases before courts of law claiming racial discrimination and, if so, how the courts had dealt with them. He asked how article 4 (b) of the Convention was reflected in Pakistan's domestic legislation and whether Pakistan had prohibited any racist organizations.

17. The information on implementation of article 5 of the Convention (paras. 56-58 of the report) was both appropriate and useful. Articles 10, 14, 18 and 38 of the Constitution were reproduced and showed how Pakistan was trying to protect the civil, political and economic, social and cultural rights of its citizens. However, there should be more clarification of the "far-reaching measures" referred to in paragraph 57.

18. In 1996, Amnesty International had reported that 5,000 cases of human rights violations committed in 1994 had been investigated. In 1995, several departmental and judicial inquiries into human rights violations had been conducted. He asked for information on the findings and any follow-up and asked in how many of the reported cases racial discrimination had been claimed. The Committee would also welcome information on whether the Constitution allowed the formation and functioning of political parties based on ethnic and/or religious affiliation.

19. He requested clarification of what was meant by the term "anti-national activity" referred to in paragraph 58 and the reference to "any person who for the time being is an enemy alien". With regard to the same paragraph, several reports, including that of Mr. Nigel Rodley, Special Rapporteur on torture (E/CN.4/1997/7/Add.2), had alleged extrajudicial killings in Sind, armed clashes with excessive use of force by government troops against the Mohajir Qaumi Movement (MQM) factions, the killing of Punjabi labourers in Karachi on 2 November 1995, and an increase in ethnic and sectarian tension. They also alleged that members of the Shi'a and Sunni Muslim organizations had attacked rival groups, that there had been sectarian clashes in Punjab and that the credibility of the police had been seriously undermined as a result of their involvement in those and other similar violent incidents. In his report, the Special Rapporteur on the question of religious intolerance (E/CN.4/1996/95/Add.1) had quoted non-official sources which alleged that the Ahmadi, Christian, Hindu and Zikri minorities had suffered attacks against their places of worship initiated by Muslim extremists, and maintained that State laws in Pakistan on religious minorities and on tolerance and non-discrimination based on religion or belief were likely to foster intolerance. The delegation should shed light on those allegations and a further allegation in the report of the Special Rapporteur on torture (E/CN.4/1997/7/Add.2) that the MQM (Altaf) faction had consistently claimed that its activists were innocent, unarmed victims of ethnic violence.

20. The report was very short on information about implementation of article 6 of the Convention, which meant that the Committee was unable to judge whether it was being implemented effectively. The reference in paragraph 59 to the fact that the law did not discriminate "between the citizens of Pakistan" raised the question whether non-citizens could be discriminated against. He requested information on the effectiveness of the Pakistani judicial system and on its several different court systems and their jurisdiction. Information would also be welcome on the Sharia Court and the decisions it had made in 1990 to introduce into Pakistan's Penal Code the concepts of Qisas ("an eye for an eye") and Diyat ("blood money"). He wondered what justification there could be for the Hadood ordinances and whether under them evidence was given different weight depending on the religion, ethnic background and sex of the witness in question. He also asked about the jurisdiction of the special courts established under the Suppression of

Terrorist Activities Act and whether they had been abolished. On the positive side, he welcomed the abolition of the Punishment of Whipping Act, 1996.

21. The information on article 7 of the Convention was extremely useful; the Government should be commended for recognizing the key role of education. A Ministry of Human Rights had been established and had already launched an awareness programme to boost knowledge of human and legal rights. It would be interesting to hear more about the programme and the terms of reference of the Ministry itself. The Pakistan authorities should also be commended for their plans to include human rights in school curricula. The Government should take heed of the Committee's General Recommendation V, which focused on article 7 of the Convention.

22. He welcomed the contents of paragraph 65 of the report and paid tribute to the Government for its policy of democratizing culture, decentralizing activities to give recognition to the regional heritage of languages and literature, revitalizing cultural institutions and promoting the equal participation of women in all sectors.

23. Lastly, he expressed appreciation for the work of Mr. Shahi, a member of the Committee and a Pakistan national, in relation to the World Conference on Human Rights and the contribution he had made to the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action.

24. Mr. WOLFRUM welcomed the renewed dialogue with Pakistan. In his opinion, however, the report was rather disappointing in that there was very little information on the practical implementation of the Convention or on cases, judgements or administrative actions concerning the question of racial discrimination. His second criticism was that Pakistan's definition of minorities was unclear and failed to recognize language as an indicator of ethnic identity.

25. With regard to legislation on representation of minorities in the legislature, mentioned in paragraph 58 of the report, and amendments to the system, further information was needed on the former system and on what had replaced it. He would also welcome clarification of why the word "would" had been used in reference to minorities' right to vote for their representatives. He also invited the delegation to explain what was meant by "hardships" facing minority communities, as mentioned in paragraph 32. The report was also short on details regarding Baluchistan and the Federally Administered Tribal Areas, particularly who lived in such areas and why they were federally administered.

26. During consideration of the ninth periodic report of Pakistan, the Committee had expressed dismay at the poor implementation of article 4. Given that fact, it was even more unsatisfactory that there should be only one paragraph in the current report regarding implementation of that article.

27. There appeared to be only one reference in the entire report (in para. 18) to the North West Frontier Province (NWFP). He would like further information on the legal situation in that area, and comments on a report that the Constitution was not fully applied in the Province and that it had a special judicial system and laws. Had the inhabitants of the Province participated in elections to the Pakistan Parliament?

28. The information in paragraph 59 of the report on the court system needed to be supplemented in order to enable the Committee to judge whether article 6 of the Convention was being fully implemented.

29. The huge influx of immigrants from India into Pakistan over the years had apparently led to a change in Pakistan's demographic composition. He asked whether that was true, whether Indian immigrants had moved mostly to urban areas and what their social and economic situation was. Also, with regard to refugees from Bangladesh, details of the extent to which they had been able to integrate into Pakistan's economic and social life would be welcome.

30. Mr. de GOUTTES asked in relation to paragraphs 15-17 of the report when it would be possible for the Committee to have information on the exact composition of the population and if the Government had considered including questions on the ethnic origins of the population in any subsequent census, given the importance of such information.

31. Turning to paragraph 55 of the report, he reminded the delegation that following consideration of Pakistan's ninth report (CERD/C/149/Add.12), the Committee, in its concluding observations, had expressed concern that the word "disharmony" used in the Penal Code was considered by the authorities to be broad enough to cover every conceivable act of racial incitement. He wondered whether any additional legislation had been enacted since then to ensure that all legislative instruments were in full conformity with article 4 of the Convention.

32. Concerning paragraph 59 of the report, he noted that no examples had been given of cases in which the provisions of the Penal Code punishing acts of racism had been applied. He hoped that in the next report Pakistan could at least provide statistics on complaints lodged, judgements delivered and redress ordered for the victims of ethnic or racial discrimination.

33. He would like to know whether the Islamic courts could still impose corporal punishment under Islamic law and, if so, what form it took. Could the Islamic courts intervene in cases involving acts of ethnic and racial discrimination?

34. He regretted that the report did not contain enough concrete information on the actual implementation of article 5. It would appear that discrimination existed against certain minorities, foreigners and immigrants in the areas of economic and social rights, particularly with regard to the right to work, housing, health care and social services.

35. Ms. ZOU Deci said that although religious differences were important, they did not constitute a criterion for defining minorities. In China, comparatively few members of the largest ethnic group, the Han, were Buddhists, whereas certain Chinese minorities, such as the Tibetans and the Mongols, were largely Buddhist. In Pakistan, the main religion was Islam, yet some Muslims in Pakistan were victims of discrimination. That suggested that it was not necessarily appropriate to define minorities on the basis of religion.

36. Paragraph 22 of Pakistan's fourteenth report spoke above all of religious minorities, and paragraphs 23-25 mentioned various institutions which had been established to resolve the problems faced by minorities. She would like to know whether those institutions dealt with religious minorities. Also, were the Kalash people, to whom reference was made in paragraph 29, also a religious minority? More generally, did Pakistan use other criteria for defining minorities apart from religion?

37. Paragraph 51 of the report cited efforts being made by the Government to ensure the health and welfare of its people, but provided no information on how that related specifically to minorities. Paragraph 60 stated that the literacy rate in Pakistan was still only 35 per cent, but that was for the country as a whole. What was the figure for minorities?

38. Article 4 of the Convention was very important, but the report only contained one paragraph relating to it. She inquired which provisions of the Penal Code ensured compliance with article 4 and how legislation was actually implemented. Were there organizations in Pakistan which engaged in discrimination in everyday life? And had acts of discrimination been committed? If so, how did the Government respond?

39. To sum up, the report of Pakistan did not give a full picture of the situation of minorities in that country. She therefore hoped that more information would be provided in the next report.

40. Mr. YUTZIS said that, like other members of the Committee, he questioned the statements contained in paragraphs 47 and 48 of the report, and in particular the assertion that Pakistan had never engaged in any act or practice of racial discrimination against persons, groups of persons or institutions (para. 48 (a)).

41. Referring to paragraph 29 on the setting-up of a National Committee on the Kalash People, he asked what the actual situation of that people was and what had led the Government of Pakistan to establish such a body.

42. It was not clear to him why the National Commission for Minorities needed to ensure the full and effective participation and association of minorities with their religious and cultural festivals and celebrations (para. 25 (c)). Did such minorities have transport problems? Did they not have the resources to hold such festivals?

43. Concerning paragraph 33, he would like to know what were the specific problems which minorities confronted. The paragraph spoke of a special meeting on matters relating to minorities, and he inquired what its results had been. It also noted that the meeting had made recommendations regarding the reactivation of the district minority committees, to which reference had been made in paragraph 28; he wondered whether those committees had not been working well.

44. What measures had emerged from the Federal Advisory Council for Minority Affairs (para. 26)? What results had been produced by the National Committee on the Kalash People (para. 29)? What decisions had been taken following the monthly meetings with members of the National Assembly (para. 30)? Was there any information to gauge the effectiveness of the bodies set up at the local level (para. 31)?

45. He had received information on an ethnic and linguistic group, the Mohajirs, who lived in Sind province. The members of that group maintained that they had been the victims of discrimination. For instance, they had cited legislation making Sindhi the official language. As there were many Mohajirs in that province, what did people do who did not speak Sindhi? Also according to the information he had received, there was a quota system for jobs and education which favoured the Sindhis and discriminated against the Mohajirs. He hoped that the delegation of Pakistan could comment on those allegations or that clarification could be provided at the next session. It was such allegations that made it hard for him to accept the assertion in paragraph 47 that there was no discrimination in Pakistan.

46. Mr. DIACONU said that the report of Pakistan would seem to suggest that that country had the most advanced legislation in southern Asia for combating racial discrimination and protecting minorities. But the Committee needed to know how that legislation was actually implemented. If, as stated in paragraph 22 of the report, minorities only made up 3.32 per cent of the total population, that notion seemed too limited, and the Committee would need more information.

47. Pakistan's legislation and Constitution prohibited discrimination on the basis of caste. He inquired what that term was taken to mean in Pakistan. Did it have ethnic or national connotations, or was it merely an economic concept?

48. Regarding article 4 of the Convention, apparently Pakistan's legislation did not prohibit organizations which promoted or incited racial discrimination. Could the delegation of Pakistan clarify that point? Pakistan was unique in that it had both a Minister for Human Rights and a Minister for Minority Affairs. What were the areas of responsibility of those two ministers?

49. The CHAIRMAN, speaking in his capacity as a member of the Committee, said that the Convention did not use the word "minority" and required a reporting State not to define that term, but to protect against less favourable treatment groups of persons distinguished, inter alia, by descent or by national or ethnic origin. The Committee would need to focus on the characteristics of a group of persons distinguished by ethnic origin. It was easy to say that the Balochis filled that description, on account of their language and customs and the territory on which they lived. But it was also possible to say that a group of persons was distinguished by ethnic origin without having any of the three attributes mentioned above. Some experts on ethnic relations regarded the Mohajirs as being such a case. It was common to look to the past to find out about origins, yet ethnic groups were being created all the time. Perhaps the Mohajirs, whose origins could be traced back to 1948, were the world's youngest ethnic group. As he saw it, it would be wrong to reject out of hand the view that the Mohajirs were a group distinguished by ethnic origin. They certainly had a political dimension, but the Committee had frequently noted a mixture of ethnic and political factors when distinguishing groups.

50. Another group worth mentioning in that context was known as the Shidis, descendants of Africans brought to the subcontinent as slaves. Present in Pakistan, where they were distinguished by a darker complexion, the Shidis maintained that they had experienced less favourable treatment on account of

their colour. It was to be hoped that the next report of Pakistan would provide information on the situation of both the Mohajirs and the Shidis.

51. Mr. van BOVEN said that although it was not legally obliged to do so, the Government of Pakistan had invited thematic rapporteurs of the Commission on Human Rights to visit and report on the situation in the country. That was a sign of constructive cooperation.

52. Long-standing discussion of the relationship between racial and religious issues had resulted in the adoption of separate international instruments on racial discrimination and religious intolerance. Nonetheless, it was not possible to draw neat separations between religious practice and racial origin, as the two were often closely linked. It was therefore not surprising that Pakistan considered it relevant to draw attention to religious minorities in its report.

53. In connection with paragraph 33 of the report, he inquired whether the prominent members of minority communities who had met with the Senator in charge of human rights belonged to the minorities mentioned in paragraph 22. Referring specifically to the situation of the Ahmadis, who were victims of widespread discrimination, including restricted access to employment and promotion, he pointed out that the Special Rapporteur on religious intolerance had concluded, in paragraph 82 of his report, that the law applicable to Ahmadis in Pakistan was questionable.

54. Although the Committee doubted the claims, made in paragraphs 48 and 54 of the report, that there had never been racial discrimination in Pakistan, the Government had certainly taken effective measures to prevent acts of discrimination. The Committee looked forward to receiving information on the role of the courts in the subsequent report. He asked whether the right of persons to seek redress for infringements of their rights, as stated in paragraph 59, included compensation for injury suffered.

55. In conclusion, he expressed the hope that Pakistan would soon ratify the amendment to article 8, paragraph 6, which had been adopted by the General Assembly, as it would serve to strengthen the Committee's administrative and financial base. He also urged the Government to comply with the General Assembly recommendation that State parties should give wide publicity to reports submitted to treaty bodies, and also the concluding observations made by those bodies.

56. Mr. FERRERO COSTA said that the report made general statements on principles but did not provide enough information for the Committee to assess Pakistan's fulfilment of the requirements of the Convention. He hoped that future reports would give more specific replies to the issues raised.

57. Claims of the non-existence of racial discrimination were unacceptable. While recognizing the tremendous difficulties faced by States, it was implausible that a multi-ethnic country with 137 million inhabitants, such as Pakistan, would be free from racial discrimination.

58. He joined his colleagues in calling for the full implementation of article 4 of the Convention. Paragraph 55 of the report should have contained information to the effect that legislation in Pakistan prohibited organizations whose doctrines led to the incitement of racial hatred or

discrimination. There was also need for further explanation of how Pakistan provided effective protection and remedies against violations of human rights and fundamental freedoms, as required under article 6.

59. The establishment of the Ministry of Human Rights was highly commendable and set an important example for other States parties. He wished to know more about the scope and functions of that Ministry, as well as the content of the various programmes aimed at increasing public awareness.

60. He expressed concern at the admission, in paragraph 60, of a 35 per cent literacy rate in Pakistan, and asked what literacy programmes had been devised. How did the Government deal with the diversity of languages in the promotion of its literacy campaigns, given the fact that only 7.6 per cent of the population spoke the national language, Urdu? The question of languages also comprised the rights of citizens in court proceedings. He wondered what provisions, in terms of language, were made in the courts for the majority of the population who did not speak Urdu.

61. The ideals expressed in paragraph 65 were welcome, and he asked for further information on how they were put into practice.

62. Mr. ABOUL-NASR invited the delegation to clarify the meaning of "Mohajir", as it was his understanding that the term did not designate a particular race or ethnic origin. He also requested clarification of the overlap between the concept of race and religion; the Committee should focus on the areas covered by the Convention.

63. The CHAIRMAN, speaking in his capacity as a member of the Committee, explained that his reference to people of darker skin colour was to a group of descendants of former African slaves, and not to Mohajirs.

64. Mr. AHMADU thanked the delegation for its report. He agreed that Pakistan had reached an advanced stage in legislation on racial discrimination, compared with other States in the region and indeed with other Islamic States. He asked for further information on the Ahmadis and the status of Urdu. In conclusion, he observed that the courts of Pakistan were famous for their landmark judgements.

65. Mr. AKRAM (Pakistan) expressed gratitude for the profound interest expressed by the Committee in the situation in his country; he would be happy to make comprehensive responses to the various questions at the following meeting.

The meeting rose at 5.55 p.m.